

## Can I Lose Weight With Chitin, a Component of Shellfish?

Many natural health practitioners are looking at chitin as a possible weight-loss tool in a diet program. While still under study, proponents of it have helped this natural product and formulations made from it popular. Those seeking to lose weight efficiently are buying this product in droves. Manufacturers and marketers of chitin have seen great sales growth in Japan and the United States in recent years. Chitin is a positively charged polysaccharide that comes from an animal source. This source is shellfish in the form of shrimp, crab and lobster. A polysaccharide is a string of sugar molecules found in the outer shell of these crustaceans. Chitin is also found in marine coral and the outer shells of certain insects, such as beetles and ants. Chitin shares chemical similarities with cellulose and starch, which are plant fibers. The weight-loss benefits of chitin are in its binding properties. Some researchers believe that the positively charged polysaccharides attract negatively charged bile acids and free fatty acids. These acids are now bound by the positively charged chitin and therefore are not absorbed into a person's system. The result is the prevention of an increase in dietary fat, which puts the pounds on a person's frame. Some evidence from studies does suggest that chitin breaks down in the stomach and changes to a gel. Some researchers believe this is where the binding takes place as this gel traps fats and cholesterol. This process is believed to occur in the intestine, where chitin prevents the fat from becoming absorbed and digested. All types of fiber are beneficial for preventing the absorption of fat into the body, at least to some degree. Studies show that chitin, as an amino polysaccharide fiber may do this to a greater degree. Some proponents believe chitin has the capacity to expel up to four times its weight in fat. Some claim it binds 10 times its weight in fat and does this better than any other kind of fiber. Some believe chitin works best when used in conjunction with a high-fat meal. If it's going to be one of those high-fat intake days, they say taking chitin can help you counter the fat. Taking chitin may help bind the fat molecules and take them through your system until they're eliminated. However, chitin does not bind carbohydrates, protein, or alcohol. Over-indulgence in them, even with chitin added to your diet, may mean you will still put on weight. Because chitin is a non-digestible, non-absorbable fiber, it acts as a carrier. It doesn't absorb into your body as other foods can. It helps carry harmful fats away through its binding capabilities before they have a chance to settle in. Studies suggest chitin may do this and help improve blood cholesterol levels as it goes about its work. Chitin is a calorie-free fiber supplement. A product that is abundantly available, it is even used in food manufacturing as an edible film to protect foods from spoiling. It is often found at a reasonable cost and is a product known for having few side effects. One caveat with chitin is that those allergic to shellfish should not consume chitin. In addition, pregnant women should not take chitin products because of a possible reduction in calcium and vitamin D absorption. Of course, any weight-loss program needs to rely on healthy foods and exercise in addition to any weight-loss supplements. It's all part of an overall healthy approach to losing weight. Along with its possible benefits as a weight-loss tool chitin has other benefits. It is used in the manufacture of surgical thread. Being biodegradable, it dissolves over time as a wound heals. It also has properties that allow for its use as a wound-healing agent. Studies continue in the uses of chitin as a weight-loss product. As a natural product, readily available, diet supplement manufacturers strive to make innovative products from it. Their focus is to further research chitin so they can use it to help those striving to take control of their weight.

### About the Author

More information on [chitosan fiber](#) for weight loss is available at VitaNet &reg;, LLC Health Food Store. <http://vitanetonline.com/>

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